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2012 Age Group Committee Report

Introduction

The Age Group Committee represents the age group multi-sport athlete in issues and serves in an advisory capacity to the national board of directors.

In addition to our advisory role on policy matters, the AGC oversees the Athlete of the Year Award and selects its recipients each year, considers and selects recipients of various “Year End Awards” (such as the Jeff Jewell Award, Multisport Comeback of the Year Award, Volunteer of the Year, Spirit of Multisport and Lifetime Achievement), is responsible for coordinating and moderating the Annual Town Hall Meeting, administers a grant program for education in rules and safety, oversees the administration of the National Rankings process and coordinates the Hall of Fame selection and induction process. The AGC does this through a group of sub-committees comprised of its members and at times in consultation with representatives of other USAT Committees.

The AGC meets via teleconferences which are held regularly on the 2nd Thursday of alternating months. During 2012 there averaged about 12 members on the committee from various regions. The committee strives to have representation from each of the 10 regions that comprise USAT and although some regions have not been responsive to designating someone to be representative on the AGC, we continue our efforts to attain this goal.

2012 Accomplishments

During 2012, the AGC accomplished several key goals:

- The “**Second Annual Athletes of the Year Celebration and Cruise**” took place in Burlington on the Thursday evening prior to the Age Group National Championship (AGNC). This second year achieved a sell-out crowd again and featured the presentation of awards to our Athletes of the Year and to some of the Year End Award winners who were present on the cruise. The dinner cruise featured guest speaker Cait Snow. This event has in two short years become a great way to kick off national championship weekend on Thursday evening. By the end of the year, the committee was into the process of selecting a new venue as AGNC moves to Milwaukee for 2013. The timeframe will remain the same and we will seek an easier method of registering for this event to again insure a sellout audience to recognize these top age group competitors.





- During 2012, a sub-committee of the AGC was formed to work with staff and make recommendations for “non-owned” championship races. The discussion was to include the process for receiving RFPs, reviewing them and awarding the events. In addition, the sub-committee would make recommendations on the qualifying criteria for the Age Group National Championship with a focus on that event becoming increasingly popular over the past two years. A charter was drafted for this committee after which it was determined that, inasmuch as “non-AGC members” were on the roster, it should be designated as a separate committee and not a sub-committee of the AGC. This transition occurred, members were appointed and deliberations have been started as of December 2012.
- The AGC made recommendations to the board concerning the age up rule for youth athletes (12 and under) after creating a white paper on the subject. After researching the topic, and referencing the work of Malcolm Gladwell in his book “The Outliers”, the AGC recommended to the board that the age up rule for this segment of the community be based upon actual age on race day as opposed to their age as of 12/31 of each year. This recommendation was not approved, to some extent due to the current ITU guidelines that dictate that all participants ages be determined based upon their age on 12/31.
- After two years, the AGC was able to get a determination on the limit of prize money for age group athletes. This issue had been on the table for over two years with no action taken by either the AAC or special task force appointed to handle it. While the AGC had recommended an increase of the prize money limit for age groupers, the board did not approve this increase, but chose instead to continue to allow “in kind” prizes exceeding the \$4,999.99 limitation to be given.
- One of the significant accomplishments of the AGC during 2012 was the promotion of Aquabike, a growing sport within the multisport community. A national championship had been approved by the board at the sprint distance. The AGC formed a subcommittee to survey Aquabike participants to ascertain their preferences and after an overwhelming percentage expressed that they prefer to race at the long distance, the board approved an AGC recommendation that subsequent Aquabike National Championships be contested at the Long Course (1.2 mi swim, 56 mi bike) distance. The selection of a venue was also approved for 2013, at the Rev3 race in Anderson, North Carolina in October.
- Another aspect of Aquabike that the AGC was able to complete late in the year was to compile a document that suggested guidelines for race directors considering the inclusion of an Aquabike at their event. Up until 2012, Aquabike events were contested at various distances, with unspecified awards and variations in finish line configurations, and so forth. The document created by the AGC is intended to “make suggestions” to race directors with the vision of Aquabike competitions becoming more “standardized” so that competitors would be able to





anticipate what to expect at each event. The document is now being finalized with an “introduction” after which it will be forwarded to the RDC for vetting and distribution at the Race Directors Conference in January 2013.

- Two issues concerning Athenas and Clydesdales were addressed during the year. The first related to the weight limits for both categories. It is recognized that the population in general is heavier than in the past, with athletes particularly being bigger and stronger than ever before. The weight limit for Athenas, after deliberations was increased from 150 pounds to 165 and for Clydesdales from 200 pounds to 220. The second issue related to the absence of awards for Athenas and Clydesdales at championship events. The AGC made a recommendation that all national championships, other than the Age Group Olympic Distance and Sprint Distance National Championships, provide awards for at a minimum Athenas and Clydesdales in the 39 and under category and 40 and over category.
- Finally, the AGC had discussed the need for changes to the national rankings process. This is particularly true for Aquabike, where participation is too low in most instances for the existing formula to apply. It also seemed appropriate to take a look to be sure that the system is working well and to make any necessary tweaks. This is a project being taken on outside of the AGC, however, the AGC has monitored progress and maintains an interest in the final result, particularly with respect to Aquabike.

2013 Goals

Some of the goals of the Age Group Committee for 2012 include:

- Finding a new venue for the Athletes of the Year Celebration and executing a great event, possibly including other award recipients (e.g. Year End Awards).
- Working to promote the growth of Aquabike, through the publication of “Suggested Guidelines”, promotion of the National Aquabike Championship in Anderson, NC, establishing a national rankings program that works effectively and encouraging race directors to include an Aquabike event at their existing races.
- Achieving at least one member of the committee from each of the 10 regions of the organization, achieving a composition that includes a proportionate share of women on the committee and continuing to collaborate closely with the regional councils and other committees of USA Triathlon.
- Work with staff on the review of the current rankings system to see where modifications might be needed and insure the implementation of those adjustments.





Conclusion

Members of the Age Group Committee dedicated many hours of work during 2012 to some very worthwhile matters in our endeavor to improve and further grow the multisport lifestyle. Many of the issues started during the year still have some work needed in order to bring them to a conclusion. Thank you to all of the members of the AGC for your dedication to the sport and for your conscientious work during 2012.

Submitted by: Chuck Graziano

